

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS

THE
STATE
OF THE
REGION
2006

M E A S U R I N G R E G I O N A L P R O G R E S S

Principal Author:
PING CHANG, Program Manager

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE 5

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 7

POPULATION 19

- Growth Characteristics 19
- Demographic Dynamics 23

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE IN THE SCAG REGION, 1970-2005 26

THE ECONOMY 39

- Employment 39
- Income 50
- Poverty 54
- Taxable Sales 55
- International Trade 55

HOUSING 59

- Housing Construction 59
- Homeownership 63
- Housing Affordability 64
- Housing Crowding 69

THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY 2006: CONCERNS AMID SATISFACTION 70

TRANSPORTATION 83

- Journey to Work: Mode Choices 83
- Journey to Work: Travel Time 85
- Highway Use and Congestion 86
- Highway Fatalities 90
- Transit Use and Performance 92
- Airports 93
- Ports 96

THE ENVIRONMENT 99

- Air Quality 99
- Water Resources 108
- Solid Waste 112
- Energy 114

THE ENERGY DETENSIVE ECONOMY: CHALLENGES AHEAD FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT 124

QUALITY OF LIFE 137

- Education 137
- Public Safety 142

METROPOLITAN REGIONS 149

- Socio-Economic Indicators 149
- Transportation 157

ENDNOTES 160

LIST OF MAPS 164

LIST OF FIGURES 164

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 166



PREFACE

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is the largest regional planning organization in the nation. For the past four decades, SCAG has been working collaboratively with local governments, stakeholders and partners in developing a shared regional vision and resolving regional challenges. SCAG has served as a regional forum where ideas for a better future are cultivated, discussed and consensus is developed.

The SCAG region, also referred to as Southern California in this report, includes six counties (Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and Ventura) and 187 cities. Currently, the region ranks 10th among the world economies. It is also one of the top global gateway regions serving both the nation and the global community. Hence, the performance of Southern California will not only impact the quality of life of its own residents but also carry national and global implications.

The State of the Region 2006, through the use of a set of performance indicators, tracks Southern California's progress in achieving the goals in SCAG's *Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide*. It compares the recent performance of our region with its own previous record and that of the other large U.S. metropolitan regions. The report is intended to raise public awareness, focus policy deliberations and shape collective actions on vital issues affecting our shared future.

The report also includes three guest essays on critical regional issues from different perspectives. The first essay furnishes an in-depth look at demographic dynamics and their implications for the region. The second essay explores residents' opinions on quality of life in the region in contrast to the report's findings from outcome-based indicators. Recognizing the growing significance of energy issues for Southern California and beyond, the third essay focuses on the challenges facing local governments with respect to energy. In addition, a new section on energy has been included in this report.

Preparation for the 2006 Report was guided by SCAG's Benchmarks Task Force, consisting of local elected officials and regional issue experts in Southern California. A companion piece, the State of the Region Report Card, includes grades for selected issue areas developed by the Benchmarks Task Force. The complete 2006 State of the Region Report and Report Card along with reports from previous years have been posted on the SCAG website at www.scag.ca.gov.